

### Supply

flashes of brilliance and both of them are possessed of gaps, in one case between the electrodes and in the other case between the ears. I take it from the Hon. Member's speech that he is in favour of the general Liberal Party approach to this problem where, instead of allowing people to donate to the charity of their choice through the tax system, he would tax all that money away from the taxpayers. It would then be up to politicians, bureaucrats or somebody associated with the government of the day to redistribute those tax dollars to a charity or cause of its choosing. That is supporting charities or causes of the Government's choosing and not necessarily those of the individual's choosing.

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member always has enjoyable interventions to make which spice up life around here. I must say that his descriptions of me personally are quite accurate and very generous. I thank him for that. Typically he has asked the key question, and I congratulate him for that. Yes, I believe that generally we should use a grant system. He has described ills that really have not occurred. What happens is a general building of a list of criteria. Any group which meets those criteria applies and receives the grant, not a politically attractive group but any group can get the grant provided it meets the criteria. That is the first important point.

Second, once it has the grant, it is accountable for the spending of the money. It cannot spend the money in ways that are unacceptable or beyond the criteria. The Hon. Member knows that because he has seen how our officials screen the activities of Summer Canada projects in his riding. They want to know what is going on. They want to make sure the money is spent in ways that Parliament has approved. There is nothing wrong with that.

Third, these grant systems are measurable. The Government can make a proposal to the House of Commons, have it debated and approved in this Chamber, and then it applies evenly across the country. It is not open-ended and beyond the capacity of the people to afford.

I remind the Hon. Member that his motion makes reference to 40,000 registered charities. He wants half of the donations to those charities to be a tax credit. That is an enormous burden on the public purse. It is an open-ended one where the spending is not accountable, where the people are not responsible in any way to the general public. I offer him a contrast. Grants are measurable, responsible and accountable, but tax breaks are general, open-ended and very expensive. He should consider that.

**Mr. Hawkes:** Mr. Speaker, I must be sitting in a different House of Commons. Earlier this day in Question Period the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) was asked simply to make public the criteria for the \$150 million worth of granting proposals, but he refused. This very day he refused to make public the criteria for spending the \$150 million. We have discovered historically that \$300 million was spent before anybody saw the criteria. To make that kind of

defence of the Government's granting record is to come from outer space.

● (1530)

I would like to ask the Member if he does or does not agree with the position of the national voluntary organizations that voluntary organizations which care about the quality of life in the country, whether it be the social quality, cultural quality or whatever, and which are entitled to a Revenue Canada tax number, should in fact be allowed to advocate for public policy. The present policy of his Government is that they cannot advocate. Is he changing his position and is the Government changing its position to say yes, groups of that kind should be allowed to advocate?

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, I would not be at all surprised if the Hon. Member found himself out of touch with the debate of the day. If I were him, I would not stand up in the House and admit it.

**Mr. Epp:** You admitted it for 20 minutes.

**Mr. Fisher:** Every government grant program which is undertaken has attached to it regular standards. For example, Summer Canada programs indicate quite frequently that there will be priorities for handicapped people. Last year, the Canada Works Program had as a high priority women who were re-entering the work force after a period of time at home.

We know where the priorities exist and we know the kinds of people who are intended to be the beneficiaries of particular grants from year to year. All of us in this Chamber know that, or we should know that, because the employment development people tell us about those standards before the grants are issued. If the Hon. Member does not go through that process, he cannot blame the Government. He is supposed to do so but he may not always undertake the fulfilment of his responsibilities. That is up to him.

**Mr. Bosley:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Member one simple question. He is making an eloquent defence of grants as opposed to tax credits. Would he apply the same view to people with child tax credits? Would he apply the same view to political Parties? Would he argue that a political Party, which represents Canadians who on a voluntary basis work for party they want to represent the people, should have their activities controlled through government grants?

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, I think there is a considerable difference between a political Party and a voluntary or charitable group. I think anyone who cannot see that is having difficulties. The Hon. Member's political Party, the political Party of the NDP and our political Party deal regularly with public decisions, with power and with influence. The Hon. Member knows that the tax grant system was set up to encourage a lot of small donors and to encourage the political Parties to get away from big power blocks which were donating huge amounts of money. In my riding today, I have, I hope, almost enough money to participate in the next election campaign. Every one of those donations has come from small